Highways, Major District Roads and other District Roads network in Tamil Nadu.

(d) No amount has been released so far.

(e) The tender process for these works is in a preliminary stage.

**Upgradation of Highways in Assam**

1847. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from Assam Government for upgradation of State Highways into National Highways;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise; and

(c) the effective steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI PON. RADHAKIRISHNAN): (a) to (c) All the proposals received from different States and Union Territories including those received from Assam for declaration of new National Highways were returned to the respective States and Union Territories. New National Highways are not being declared due to fund constraints.

**Corruption in Highway Construction Project**

1848. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had received a confidential letter in November, 2002 from a concerned citizen a Deputy General Manager in the National Highway Authority and made revelations about contractor mafia, loot and extreme corruption in the Union Government's Highways Construction Projects;

(b) whether the complainant had implored that his name should be kept as secret;

(c) whether it is a fact that his name was revealed with the result that he had to pay with his life which he had feared; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI PON. RADHAKIRISHNAN): (a) to (d) A letter was received by Prime Minister's Office in November, 2002 from Shri S.K. Dubey, the then Manager (Tech.), Gaya in the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The letter was unsigned, particulars of Shri S.K. Dubey was attached in a separate sheet which was also unsigned. The letter pointed perceived deficiencies and irregularities in implementation of the National Highways Development Project (NHDP). Anonymous or improperly identified letters are not to be acted upon as per the Central Vigilance Commission guidelines. However, since Shri Dubey's letter carried an annexure that gave his name and address and it made seemingly important observations on the implementation of the NHDP, the letter was passed on to NHAI through Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, to deal with the issues mentioned therein. The passing on of the letter within the Governmental system does not constitute 'breach of confidentiality'. Infact, neither Ministry of Road Transport and Highways nor NHAI disclosed the identity of Shri S.K. Dubey in any manner. The motive behind the murder of Shri S.K. Dubey and the culprit will be known only after completion of the investigation.

**Withdrawal of ban on imported items**

†1849. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's decision to withdraw ban on the import of hundreds of items proved to be devastating for the Small Scale Industries;

(b) if so, whether any assessment of the devastation has been made;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) Government is constantly assessing and monitoring the impact of the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) and WTO Agreements on the economy including the Small Scale Industries (SSIs) in the country. Though removal of QRs have exposed the SSIs to a greater competition, yet the SSI sector has continued to grow. However, even after the removal of QRs, protection to

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.